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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development and implementation of the Georgia Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD) program in the Gwinnett County School District. Implemented during the 1988-89 school year, the program is based on collaboration between the University of Georgia and the school district. Participants in the 12-month program are required to complete a one-quarter, fulltime internship; a seminar practicum; and 30 credit-hours of course work. The school system has completely funded tuition and book costs for participants, who aspire to become lead teachers, assistant principals, or principals. Over the years, the curriculum has been modified in response to participants' recommendations. Courses deal with supervision, supervision instruction, curriculum planning, leadership for staff development, school administration, personnel administration, and group processes. Each participant has continued to demonstrate outstanding performance in the classroom while responding effectively to the heavy demands of the LEAD program. A lesson learned is that active support of district leadership is essential for the program's success. (LMI)

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LEADERSHIP ENHANCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (LEAD): A FLOURISHING PRODUCT OF SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

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Initiation of the LEAD Program

Very early in the 1987-1988 school year a rapidly growing need in an even more rapidly growing school system created an opportunity for an unusual degree of cooperation and collaboration between a public school system and a state university. The need was for qualified leadership candidates with strong instructional backgrounds who could become lead teachers, assistant principals, or principals in the Gwinnett County (Georgia) Public Schools. The opportunity was the challenge offered to The University of Georgia to design and implement--with the cooperation and continuing collaboration of school personnel-- a program of preparation for potential school leaders that would warrant university recognition while addressing the immediate and pressing needs of the Gwinnett County Public Schools.

The earliest expression of the need in Gwinnett County and the offer of the opportunity for collaboration with the University in meeting that need came from the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel. After conferring with the Superintendent he decided to explore the possibilities of a jointly developed and implemented program with the University that would focus on the preparation of school leaders who would gain strong instructional backgrounds while also meeting requirements for leadership certification previously established by the Georgia Department of Education.

Because of the determination by the Superintendent that any program to be designed must give strong emphasis to developing skills for instructional leadership, the original overture for cooperation was made to the Department of Curriculum and Supervision. However, the requirements for certification of school leaders established by the Georgia Department of Education have always been a shared concern between the Department of Curriculum and Supervision and the Department of Educational Administration and have provided the opportunity over the years for the two departments to plan cooperatively each program of leadership preparation submitted for approval by the state authority. It was urged, therefore, that the request for the

development of a special program for the Gwinnett County Public Schools should be made directly from the Superintendent to the Dean of the College of Education. The Superintendent made that contact and found a Dean who was most eager to support the cooperative effort.

The enthusiastic support of top level leadership in the Gwinnett County Public Schools and in the College of Education for this program has, from the beginning, been an invigorating force and, in the view of both the school and college planners, has been essential for its continuation and success. Following their original joint determination to launch and support a cooperative program, the Superintendent and the Dean assigned to others the responsibility for the development and implementation of the LEAD program, but they continued their strong interest in the program and participated actively in seminar activities associated with the program.

The idea for the LEAD program was endorsed in 1987 by the Superintendent in Gwinnett County, Dr. Alton C. Crews. Dr. Crews retired during the 1990-1991 school year; Mr. George Thompson was named to succeed him. Mr. Thompson has continued the support for LEAD and has made it a priority for the

allocation of scarce resources. Within the College of Education Dean Alphonse Buccino rallied college resources to initiate the program and continues to be a strong supporter. He left the University for several months on leave to a special assignment in Washington; during that time Dr. Russell Yeany served as Dean and continued the same enthusiastic support for the program. Any one of those changes in key personnel could have resulted in a weakening or elimination of the LEAD program. That the program continues is a tribute to the vision of those leaders and to the effectiveness of those who have been a part of the program. But the message from the LEAD program to anyone who is considering a cooperative program between schools and college is that the active support of top level leadership is essential.

The Planned Program for LEAD

Following the agreement between the Superintendent of the Gwinnett County Public Schools and the Dean of the College of Education at the University of Georgia that a cooperative program of leadership preparation should be launched, each named a person or group responsible for planning and coordination. In Gwinnett County the Office of Staff Development was to carry out that responsibility; at the University of Georgia a member of the

faculty in the Department of Curriculum working with the Department Chairman, Dr. Gerald R. Firth, was named Coordinator.

Planning a twelve-month program to develop school leaders who would have strong backgrounds in instruction and who would hold state level certification to serve as principal or assistant principal became the focus of activities in late 1987 and early 1988. State level requirements at that time demanded that applicants for the NL-5 certificate in Administration and Supervision earn 5 quarter hours in general curriculum and 25 quarter hours in administration and supervision. Candidates were required also to hold the Master's degree, have three years of teaching experience, and record an acceptable score on a state-administered test to assess knowledge in the leadership areas.

The program proposed for LEAD for the first year of operation, 1988-1989, called for participants to earn 40 quarter hours of credit rather than the state-required 30. In addition to the thirty hours of traditional academic offerings amended to reflect the cooperation between the professors from the University of Georgia and counterpart practitioners within the Gwinnett County Public Schools, 10 quarter hours were added that,

in the view of the planners, gave the LEAD program the elements necessary to produce school leaders who would be knowledgeable about instruction and ready to assume important leadership positions immediately following their completion of the program.

The key addition proposed was a one-quarter, full-time internship during the Spring Quarter of the study year. That experience was assigned five quarter hours of academic credit. Program planners were able to enlist to guide the internship Dr. Don Carver who had been appointed to join the faculty at the University in 1988 and who had been named Chairman of the Department of Administration. Dr. Carver brought rich experience in providing internship experiences for school leaders; his involvement brought immediate credibility to the internship experience. The internship under his direction has, from the beginning and throughout the five years, been the capstone experience of the LEAD program. (The internship carried the official designation of EAS 970--Internship in Administration.)

The other important addition to the preparation sequence was a practicum experience designed to span the year and to engage the LEAD participants, their school leadership team members, central office staff members from the Gwinnett County Public

Schools, faculty members in the LEAD program, and leadership personnel in the College of Education. The practicum was assigned five hours of academic credit and consisted of a series of dinner seminars designed to facilitate interaction among and between all those involved in the LEAD experience and to engage the group in consideration of contemporary topics affecting education that would not necessarily be treated in regular course offerings. Responsibility for planning and hosting the seminar sessions was assigned to LEAD participants. The seminar occasions were considered the "glue" to bind together and to enrich all those who had interest in the LEAD program. (The seminars carried the official designation of ECS 980--Practicum in Supervision.)

The remaining 30 quarter hours of academic credit were dedicated to six conventionally offered courses, but each of those courses was designed to reflect the special needs in the schools of Gwinnett County and to facilitate cooperation between the professors from the University and their counterparts from the Gwinnett County Public Schools. The other six courses were:

ECS 721--INTRODUCTION TO SUPERVISION

ECS 722--SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION

ECS 708--CURRICULUM PLANNING

ECS 825--LEADERSHIP FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

EAS 900--INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

EAS 906--PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

During the first year of the LEAD program participants began their program in the Fall Quarter. They attended one regular class on a weekly basis (ECS 721) and enrolled also in the seminars that spanned the academic year; that was the ECS 980 described above. In the Winter Quarter 1989 they enrolled in and attended weekly ECS 722. During the Spring Quarter 1989 participants were relieved from all classroom responsibilities and were engaged full time during the school day in the internship (EAS 970) referred to above. During the internship quarter they also attended class weekly in the late afternoon and evening in each of two classes: ECS 708 and ECS 825. Their program was completed in the Summer Quarter 1989 with enrollment in two courses which were conducted on separate days throughout the summer term; those courses were EAS 900 and EAS 906. All the course offerings were delivered in sites within the school system judged most convenient by the LEAD participants.

Based on their experiences in the LEAD program the first-year participants made recommendations for reordering the courses

The pattern of course offerings has remained the same for the LEAD groups in 1991-1992 and 1992-1993. The comparison is complicated only by changes in course numbers recommended by the newly merged Department of Educational Leadership to reflect more appropriately the level of offering of the courses. EAS 900 is now EAS 700. ECS 825 is now ECS 725. EAS 812 is now EAS 712. EAS 970 is now EAS 780. Such changes create momentary vexations for the planners but have the very positive effect of reminding all those involved that a program to prepare leaders for changing schools must itself change, often in very substantial ways.

The 1991-1992 and 1992-1993 LEAD groups began their summers with EAS 700 and ECS 721. For the Fall Quarter each group enrolled in Leadership for Staff Development (ECS 825 in 1991, now ECS 725) and in Personnel Administration (EAS 906). In each Winter Quarter the courses were Curriculum Planning (ECS 708) and Leadership for Effective Schools (EAS 812 in 1992, now EAS 712). The courses scheduled for Spring Quarter were EAS 780--Internship in Administration and ECS 722--Supervision of Instruction.

Still another change is planned for the 1993-1994 LEAD class. A need identified by alumni of the program is for more experience in group process. In response to that need the new

program will include ECS 824--Group Development. That course will replace ECS 721--Introduction to Supervision with the intent of emphasizing the essential concepts of ECS 721 in other courses. The planners will remain responsive to advice from all those involved in the LEAD program as efforts continue to offer the best possible opportunities for those who would be school leaders focused on the improvement of instruction.

A Final Word

The LEAD program draws its strength from the wisdom and power of collaboration between dedicated professionals at the school and university level. Since 1987 that group has had the very great advantage in planning and carrying out the LEAD program of having a school system and a college willing to dedicate monetary and human resources in generous measure. The school system has funded completely the tuition and book costs of all participants. More importantly the school system has borne the substantial cost of employing fully certificated and thoroughly capable teachers to replace the LEAD participants as they have surrendered their classrooms each Spring Quarter to engage in the full-time, full-quarter capstone experience of the

to benefit those who would follow them. The planners moved immediately to incorporate their recommendations. The most important change was that of starting the program for the year in the summer rather than in the fall. The EAS 900 and the ECS 721 became the summer offerings in 1989 for the 1989-1990 cohort. ECS 825 and ECS 980 were scheduled for the Fall Quarter 1989. For the Winter Quarter 1990 the LEAD participants enrolled in EAS 906 and ECS 708. During their final quarter, the Spring Quarter 1990, the 1989-1990 participants were engaged in the internship (EAS 970) and were enrolled also in ECS 722--Supervision of Instruction to ensure that their program concluded with a strong emphasis on the development of skills for instructional leadership.

Planning for the third group of LEAD participants in 1990-1991 demanded further adjustments in the program to accommodate changed and increased requirements for state level certification. The new requirements specified areas to be addressed and increased the number of requisite quarter hours from 30 to 35. To meet the new requirements one course was added (EAS 910--School Business Management). To make room for that offering the seminar experience was eliminated as a separate course offering and became, instead, the year-long laboratory experience and

responsibility of ECS 825--Leadership for Staff Development. At the same time the 1990-1991 LEAD class was beginning its program, the two University departments involved with that program were officially merged. The Department of Curriculum and Supervision and the Department of Administration were combined to become the Department of Educational Leadership. That move has facilitated the planning activities for LEAD and, indeed, for all other programs in which those two departments have been engaged.

In order to preserve for the program planners the opportunity for innovation through the LEAD program, approval was sought in 1990 from the State Department of Education for modest exceptions to the specific course requirements established for state level certification for school leaders. That approval was granted; the planners were then able to avoid scheduling the new state-required EAS 812--Leadership for Effective Schools as a separate course in 1990-1991. The material of that course was, instead, addressed across the array of courses. In the next year, for the 1991-1992 LEAD group, EAS 812 was established as a course in the curriculum. To make room for EAS 812 the planners removed EAS 910--School Business Management from the course offerings and caused the essential content from that course to be emphasized during the internship.

internship. Within the individual schools the principals and members of their leadership teams have given generously of their time and talents to identify candidates for the LEAD program and to provide guidance to LEAD participants during the internship.

At the university level priority consideration has been given to the scheduling of courses and professors to meet the demands of the LEAD program. Classes have been restricted to those in the LEAD program, and those classes have been limited to fifteen. All classes have been taught in Gwinnett County. Officials at the University of Georgia have been eager to make these contributions because they honor what the Gwinnett County Public Schools seek to accomplish for their students and faculty and because they see in the model of collaboration evidenced in this program one that can be, and should be, implemented in many places in this state and others.

The value of this program must be gauged ultimately by the contribution it makes to those who are the LEAD products. The participants came to the LEAD program as outstanding teachers in the Gwinnett County Public Schools. They had been thoughtfully considered and recommended by their principals as potential school leaders, rigorously screened by a system-wide committee,

and then invited to become participants in the LEAD program. Each has continued outstanding performance in the classroom while responding eagerly and effectively to the very heavy demands of the LEAD program. The contributions of the LEAD alumni are already felt in the Gwinnett County Public Schools, but it is these star teachers, now school leaders in every sense, who should rate the efforts of the LEAD program. These participants have extended the force of collaboration by sharing their suggestions along the way; their continued collaboration is necessary if the planners are to maintain a program to meet the changing needs of leadership in the schools generally and in the schools of Gwinnett County specifically.